

so fast they burnt through the bottom of his sneakers. He scorched his bare soles so badly he was laid up for six weeks. Juanita had to cater to his every whim while he sat on the sofa watching game shows and recuperating.

"So am I, Clete, so am I," she said.

They drove on down Mission Ave, trying to remember what they had been arguing about.

THE BASH

It's my kid's birthday and my family and the in-laws are all here.

"Shit," I say. I'm BBQing hamburger and hot dogs and the coals flared up and burned my wrist. I don't have one of those long BBQ spatulas, just a regular kitchen one. I roll the hot dogs and flip a couple of the burgers.

It's a real bash; my wife's grandmother is sitting on the sofa with her blue hair, smoking lots of cigarettes, my old man looks disgusted and tells me that I should clean the tracks of my sliding glass door, they're filthy, my mother-in-law is telling everyone what her psychic said (he said her grandchildren are geniuses), my wife's cousin, Amy, is running around in a pair of tight jeans and a low cut blouse attracting a lot of attention, her husband, Dale, is working on his ninth beer and telling everyone how great the L.A. Raiders are, my mother is talking real estate, my wife and sister are talking drapes, some old guy who I've never met before (I think he's with the in-laws) keeps telling me that he wants his hamburger medium rare ("it ruins them when you cook them all to shit."), my brother-in-law is talking insurance, the kids are screaming, yelling and fighting, and my father-in-law is running around with a movie camera, getting it all down for posterity.

"I hear you're shooting blanks now." It's Amy. She sits down in the lawn chair by the BBQ and leans forward a bit, so I can see her breasts. I turn some of the burgers and roll the hot dogs.

"Yeah, I finally had it done. Four kids is enough." Her nipples are brown.

"You know, it's too bad. I was considering having you father a child for me. Dale thinks he's sterile." She's

smiling. I don't know how to take her. She's always playing games.

I look around, no one in the immediate vicinity. "Well, why don't we get together some night, you know, for the sake of what might have been." I can't believe I said it. The beer must be starting to work on me.

"That sounds really interesting," she says. She gets up and walks over to the picnic table where Dale is sitting, giving me a look over her shoulder that makes my mouth water.

"Ouch." The coals flare up again.

Everyone has eaten and they're starting to get drunk. I walk down the hall to the bathroom. Amy opens the door just as I get there. She gives me another look and rubs her body against me as she goes by. I reach up and feel her breasts, rubbing the brown nipples through her blouse. They get harder. She giggles and pushes me away. I hear a noise at the end of the hall. It's that idiot, my father-in-law, running his movie camera at us. She walks by him, through the living room and out on to the patio, blushing all the way. My wife's grandmother blows a plume of smoke and says, "I think that girl should wear a bra, don't you?" I grab the movie camera from him and walk out the front door. I smash it to pieces on the driveway.

INCHWORM

People get intoxicated and go to fast food restaurants on Friday night and do things they wouldn't ordinarily do.

Earlier that night two women had come in, ordered some greasy food, and flirted outrageously with him. They were in their early thirties, quite pretty, quite drunk. A lot of make-up, nicely dressed. They told him to take his pants off.

"I'm sorry, I'm on duty now. Perhaps another time." That was the way to handle it. Say something innocuous and get them out of your face. That was the way to do it. They're not looking to get laid anyway, and even if they were, he wasn't off until 2 in the morning. If they were really seriously horny either the mood would be gone or some other lucky fool would get in their way. A lot could happen to a couple of horny women in a couple of hours. It didn't matter. Just get them out of your face.